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To All Interested Parties:

Wisconsin Works (W-2) is at a crossroads in history. For September 2001, 47 months after the implementation of W-2, only 8,062 families were receiving cash assistance while another 3,734 were receiving case management services. This reflects our success in moving families from welfare to work.

Does this success, however, mean that our work is finished? No, it does not. Rather, it provides us the opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments to date and consider the challenges that we face in the future.

It was in the spirit that the Department of Workforce Development commissioned the White Papers that are included in this folder. Simply put, the Department wanted a framework through which some of the questions most relevant to our continuing success could be addressed.

The topics addressed in the White Papers—the changing nature of the caseload, supporting job retention and advancement, addressing the needs of the hardest to serve, integrating non-custodial parents into the family, and breaking the cycle of dependency—were developed out of a series of discussions. These discussions took place in several informal, as well as, formal settings, including the W-2 CEO Summit in March 2000 and the W-2 Research Conference in June 2000.

The authors of the various White Papers were selected following a Request for Proposal process in August 2000. They and their associated organizations represent a diversity of viewpoints in the world of welfare reform, reflecting the wide interest that currently exists in our efforts in this area.

As stated in W-2 Achievements and Challenges: An Overview and Interpretation of the White Papers, “welfare reform is not an event, nor a single piece of legislation.” It is the Department’s hope that these White Papers will serve as part of the foundation through which we can move forward together to face the challenges of the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Baker'.

Eric Baker
Administrator